

A Guide for a Successful College Experience

Welcome to Connors State College and congratulations on taking the opportunity to begin your college career. Understanding some of the differences between high school and college can help you achieve a successful college experience.

HOW IS COLLEGE DIFFERENT FROM HIGH SCHOOL?

1. **High School:**

A typical school year is 36 weeks long. Most classes extend over both semesters and meet every day that school is in session.

College:

An academic year is divided into two separate 15-week semesters with a week for final exams. Most college classes do not meet every day. They may meet Monday, Wednesday, Friday or Tuesday and Thursday. If the class is an evening class, the meeting may be once per week. This more rapid pace can come as a surprise, especially when you are enrolled in high school classes that meet daily and might not be ending for several more months.

2. **High School:**

Class attendance is usually mandatory and monitored carefully.

College:

Attendance policies may vary with each instructor and are stated on the course syllabus in each class. Lack of attendance will almost always negatively impact your success, and your grade may be lowered for excessive absences in some classes.

3. **High School:**

Teachers may remind you of incomplete or missing assignments or approach you if they believe you need assistance.

College:

Although instructors are usually open and helpful, most will not remind you of incomplete work and will expect you to ask if you need help.

4. **High School:**

Teachers may be available for make-up assignments or tests before, after, or even during class.

College:

Instructors will expect you to take care of make-up work or any extra help you might need during their scheduled office hours. Full-time faculty members at Connors keep ten office hours per week which are listed on the course syllabus as well as posted on their office doors. Adjunct/part-time faculty will work with you to determine a time for make-up work since they keep limited office hours.

5. **High School:**

Make-up tests are usually available.

College:

Make-up tests are probably available. Each instructor's policy for make-up exams is stated on the course syllabus, and policies vary by instructor. Most instructors have a limited time for making up work. In any case, it is your responsibility request a make-up exam if needed.

6. **High School:**

Teachers may rearrange test dates to avoid conflict with school events.

College:

Instructors usually schedule tests without regard to outside activities. School activities are considered excused absences, and make-up work is allowed. Activity sponsors at Connors provide instructors with a list of students who are to be excused. You will need to provide signed documentation in advance when an activity at your high school conflicts with a class at Connors. Remember, *excused* means that you are allowed to make up any work missed because of your absence. Deadline dates for work due will probably not be changed, and make-up work must be taken care of during an instructor's office hours.

7. **High School:**

Testing is often frequent, covering small amounts of material. A low grade on the first test, essay, or speech may not have an adverse effect on the final grade in a class.

College:

Testing or other major assignments in college are usually less frequent (3-4 times a semester). First tests, essays, or speeches are often "wake-up" calls, but they also account for a large part of your course grade. Contact your instructor sooner rather than later if you need help or have questions regarding your grade. Instructors submit mid-term grades after the eighth week of the spring and fall semesters. If your mid-term grade is not posted or otherwise provided by your instructor, you may request it in the registrar's office.

8. **High School:**

Consistently good homework grades and/or extra credit projects may raise your overall grade when test grades are low.

College:

Grades on tests and major papers usually provide most of the course grade. Extra credit projects cannot, generally speaking, be used to raise a grade in a college course. At Connors, an instructor's extra credit policy should be stated on the course syllabus.

9. **High School:**

High school is a teaching environment in which you acquire facts and skills. You are usually guided closely and told what to do.

College:

College is a learning environment in which you take responsibility for thinking through and applying what you have learned. Instructors expect you to consult the course syllabus for grading standards and other course policies. Although an adviser will assist you with enrollment, the *CSC College Catalog* and *Student Handbook* contain important information such as graduation requirements and your rights and responsibilities as a college student.

A Final Word about Finals Week

The last week of every semester is finals week. During finals week, each class meets only one time--for the final exam. The final exam schedule is in the course schedule as well as on the Connors website, but most instructors inform and remind students of exam times for their courses. Many also post the exam schedule in their classrooms and on their office doors. Instructors usually do not keep regular office hours during this time, and most require that all make-up or incomplete work be submitted by the end of the previous week. These deadlines may seem to come quickly, especially if the semester at your high school doesn't end for another week, and teachers are still available there to answer questions. Don't let deadlines and finals week take you by surprise!